CEDAW FACT SHEET

"Discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity."

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979.

THE CONVENTION

As of December 1991, 110 States had ratified the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979 and entered into force on 3 September 1981. The Convention sets the standard for eliminating discrimination between men and women, and is often considered as an international bill of rights for women.

The Convention provides an agenda for women's civil, legal and reproductive rights, as well as for national legislation to end discrimination against women. In its multi-dimensional approach, the Convention is the only human rights treaty to affirm women's reproductive rights and to target culture and tradition as important forces shaping gender roles.

THE COMMITTEE

The *Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW), established in 1982, monitors the implementation of the Convention and performs advisory functions for the UN General Assembly.

It comprises 23 members who are elected in their individual capacities by States parties under the criteria that they be experts "of high moral standing and competence in the field covered by the Convention". The members are elected for a four-year term, and the officers of the committee are elected for a two-year term.

CEDAW convenes for two weeks a year to consider the progress made in implementing the Convention and to make suggestions and general recommendations based on the examination of reports and information received from States parties. It makes an annual report on its activities to the General Assembly through ECOSOC.

RECOMMENDATIONS

At the annual meetings, CEDAW may make general recommendations to States parties based on its examination of reports. Past general recommendations have included:

Education to eliminate sex stereotyping

States parties to the Convention should adopt education and information programmes to eliminate sex stereotyping which hinders women's full equality.

Temporary special measures

States parties should make more use of temporary special measures, such as positive action, preferential treatment or quota systems to advance women's integration into education, the economy, politics and employment.

Women in international organizations

States parties should implement Article 4 of the Convention to ensure to women equal opportunity to represent their governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations.

Violence against women

States parties should include in their reports statistical information on violence against women and measures to eradicate it, including support services for women who are victims of aggression or abuse.

Equal pay

States parties should compare typical women's jobs and typical men's jobs, and, where applicable, ensure adherence to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

Female circumcision

States parties should take measures to eradicate the practice of female circumcision, including infor-

mation about this ''traditional practice'' and problems arising from it; appropriate national health policies; support for political and religious leaders, women's organizations and leaders in the arts and media striving to eradicate this practice.

Women and AIDS

States parties should intensify efforts to inform the public of the risk of HIV infection and AIDS. These programmes should give special attention to the rights and needs of women and children, the reproductive role of women and their subordinate position in some societies, which makes them especially vulnerable to HIV infection. The impact of AIDS on women should be included in the Member States' reports to the Committee. Women's role as primary health-care providers and educators should be utilized as a resource.

Women in the informal sector

States parties should include in their reports statistical data on the legal and social situation of women who work without pay and on the availability of social security and social benefits in family-owned enterprises, as well as initiating action to secure these benefits.

Unpaid domestic work

States parties should encourage research and studies to measure and value women's unpaid domestic work. They should also take steps to quantify this type of work and include it in the gross national product.

Disabled women

States parties should provide in their periodic reports information on disabled women, including

1992 MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Mervat Tallawy—Chairperson	Egypt
Ryoko Akamatsu—Vice-Chairperson	Japan
Zagorka Ilic—Vice-Chairperson	Yugoslavia
Ana Maria Alfonsin de Fasan—Vice-Chairperson	Argentina
Chryssanthi Laiou-Antoniou—Rapporteur	Greece
Charlotte Abaka	Ghana
Emna Aouij	Tunisia
Desirée P. Bernard	Guyana
Dora Gladys Nancy Bravo Nuñez de Ramsey	Ecuador
Carlota Bustelo García del Real	Spain
Ivanka Corti	Italy
Elizabeth Evatt	Australia
Grethe Fenger-Möller	Denmark
Norma Monica Forde	Barbados
Aida González Martínez	Mexico
Tatiana Nikolaeva	Russian Federation
Edith Oeser	Germany
Teresita Quintos-Deles	Philippines
Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling	Germany
Lin Shangzhen	China
Kongit Sinegiorgis	Ethiopia
Rose N. Ukeje	Nigeria
Kissem Walla-Tchangai	Togo

measures taken to deal with these women's special needs, such as equal access to education, employment, health services and social security.

1992 MEETING

At its 1992 meeting (20-31 January 1992 at the United Nations Secretariat in New York), CEDAW reviewed the reports of nine countries, three initial or consolidated reports and six secondary reports submitted after four or more years:

Initial reports	***Secondary reports***
Barbados	China
Ghana	Czech and Slovak Federal Republic
Honduras	El Salvador
	Spain
	Sri Lanka
	Venezuela

SPECIAL FOCUS: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The 1992 CEDAW meeting also focused special attention on the issue of violence against women. In 1991 the Committee had decided that its 1992 session would review the implementation of Article 6 of the Convention, which deals with trafficking, exploitation and prostitution of women and "other articles related to violence towards women and the sexual harassment and exploitation of women". This review will be based on information provided to the Committee in reports by States parties.

CEDAW also had before it for comment the report of the *Expert Group Meeting on Violence against Women* which was convened by the Division for the Advancement of Women from 11 to 15 November 1991 and which includes a proposed draft declaration on violence against women to be considered by the Commission on the Status of Women at its 1992 session in March.

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